

Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde



Happy New Year, CMS. I wish each of you the happiest and healthiest 2020 imaginable! January is such an exciting time in our lives as we shake the dust from the passing year and begin to unwrap this fresh, new year of unrealized dreams and ambitions. And, while all of that can mean something entirely different for each one

of us individually, here at CMS, **we are looking at a fresh push while building on the gains we have made** in our first full year administering CMS under the marvelous leadership of Governor JB Pritzker.

As we think about what comes next at CMS and in our work lives, I am proud to say that we have been able to report some significant strides in how we operate and the results we are achieving as we seek continuous improvement in our administrative operations and service delivery to those who depend on us. Here are just a few of our 2019 CMS achievements, which we outlined in our holiday card to the Governor and his staff:

2019 – CMS Key Accomplishments at a Glance

1. Improved State Employee Health Care Offerings; more than \$500M Cost Savings through 2023.
2. Expanded Rapid Results Support for Continuous Improvement; recovery of \$20.5M per year.
3. Reworked CMS Hiring Process to improve candidate skills and cut hiring time to 45 days or fewer.
4. Finalized 29 State Collective Bargaining Agreements, with just 4 still to go; 1st time since 2015.
5. Strategic Sourcing activities aligned with Business Enterprise Program (BEP) in CMS to enable and improve equity and diversity in procurements.
6. Capacity Building at CMS through organizational alignment, improved teamwork, and training.

Together, we have reviewed numerous key processes and operational functions, and we have added value even as we have trimmed waste. Together, we are recapturing tens of millions of dollars each year through eliminated waste, and we are recapturing valuable staff time, to the tune of 400 or more person-hours of time each year within the 35 agencies we have served under our Rapid Results initiative for continuous improvement. That recaptured time is only meaningful if we are managing operations properly and directing those saved hours to other job needs, but so far, so good. In CMS and other executive agencies, managers, and staff understand the long-term importance of utilizing the time we have available in the most meaningful and productive ways we can.

Those efforts, together with our unfolding plan to set more viable, long-range strategies in place for CMS and all other agencies, are helping us focus past the day-to-day glitches that come up, and manage to the longer term where improved preparation can blend with opportunities along the way to help us identify and overcome those daily barriers in the most efficient ways possible.

The CMS leadership team is excited to have outlined a comprehensive strategy for our agency in 2019, a multi-year plan that will guide actions through 2023 and is already being implemented and adapted systematically within every bureau, program or key process functions. That means the overall CMS strategy is being translated to individual staff actions for success at every level of the organization. You will see the whole plan as it is refined and finalized in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, here are highlights of our CMS goals for the year ahead, as we recently shared them with the Governor and staff:

2020 – CMS Key Goals and Objectives at a Glance

1. Institutionalize Comprehensive Personnel Reforms.
2. Promote equity and inclusion within all Personnel and Strategic Sourcing activities.
3. Prioritize the Sale of the James R. Thompson Center (JRTC).
4. Develop CMS Leadership and Oversight Role within Illinois Procurement Process.
5. Institutionalize Modern Data Practices for Program Tracking and Evaluation.
6. Improve Customer Value and Reduce Waste in All Key Processes.
7. Improve Professional Development within CMS; Compliance Training among Outside Agencies.

As you can see, our key goals for 2020 build directly on our administrative successes from 2019 in areas of Personnel Reform, improved Customer Value and the Elimination of Waste in key processes and services through Rapid Results, improved and modernized Data Analytics Practices to help us track our activities and

progress more effectively, all amid our improved attention to Professional Development and Service Delivery throughout the agency.

CMS also is proud to have been asked by the Governor's office to establish a Strategic Planning process and training format for all agencies to learn from and follow as needed. This will help all agencies gain alignment in the various approaches to long-term strategic planning and translate those considered objectives into meaningful and coordinated actions.

I expect to see each and every one of our CMS staff members play a significant role in achieving our agency goals, and in helping other agencies achieve theirs. We are excited, to say the least, and my leadership team and I want to make sure we provide all CMS staff with the skills, tools, and guidance to succeed and continue to grow through this exciting year! Many thanks again for all you do for CMS, and all that we will be doing together as we move through 2020!

Having a Healthy 2020

Living your Best Life in 2020 and Beyond – Challenge Accepted!



CMS cares about you, your health and your mental wellbeing and we are committed to supporting the wellbeing of every employee. That's why CMS is

launching our new Health and Wellness Campaign entitled: "Living Your Best Life," in 2020 and beyond! With this campaign, CMS will be challenging all employees to live their best life, through goal-setting, mindfulness, physical activities, emotional wholeness, spiritual and/or community motivations, and mental health projects. We challenge you to be your best self in 2020 and beyond.

Join us on this journey in 2020. We will be asking you about what you're interested in, and then challenging you to goal-set and do something new or different along with your fellow coworkers. Things like, walking 20 minutes a day, spending 20 minutes away from screens, meditating, yoga, running a 5K, journaling, or take time out just for you to breathe. There are endless possibilities for these challenges.

Stay tuned for more details and get ready to accept the challenge.

Join a Webinar

Magellan is offering the following webinars:

- Thursday, January 23, 12:00 – 1:00 pm CT – **Tackling Life's Challenges with Resilience and Grit** During this webinar, you will learn the meaning of resilience and grit, characteristics of people with these traits, benefits to building these skills, and ways to improve your resilience and grit. No registration necessary. You may join the webinar at: <http://magellanhealth.adobeconnect.com/rcfrbigl903p/>. To log in as Guest, simply enter name and click on "Enter Room." For audio, you may please unmute your computer speakers to access the audio or dial in at 719-234-7800, access code 993237.



Programs for You

Our employee health plans offer a wide range of programs for members and dependents enrolled in each plan. While you may often consider the benefits available when you see a healthcare provider, your plan likely offers many additional benefits at low or no-cost to you, and may also provide discounts on programs and services to help you live your best life. Look for your health plan below to find what yours has to offer.

Aetna – HMO,OAP and Quality Care Health Plan (QCHP)

- **Aetna Discount Program** – special discounts on gym memberships, weight-loss programs, vision services, hearing aids and more
- **Monthly Wellness Tips** – topical insight and information to help members engage with their wellness

Blue Cross Blue Shield – Blue Advantage and HMO Illinois

- **Well onTarget** – website and app with personalized tools and resources:
 - Health Assessment
 - Member Wellness portal to set, track and reach your wellness goals,
 - Earn "Blue Points" and redeem your points for small rewards
- **Fitness Program** – unlimited access to a nationwide network of more than 10,000 fitness locations for \$25 per month
- **Special Beginnings** – maternity program to help pregnant members understand and manage their pregnancy
- **Blue365 Member Discount Program** – discounts on health-related products, health and fitness clubs, weight -loss programs and more

HealthLink OAP

- **Member Toolbox** – tools to help members live healthier, happier lives including quitting smoking, finding cheaper ER alternatives, healthy living and lifestyle management
- **Educational Library** – information on health and wellness, recipes for better health and preventative care

Health Alliance HMO

- **Health & Wellness** – information and resources to help you be the best you can be:
 - Care Coordination
 - Disease Management
 - Health Coaching
 - Risk Assessment Tools
 - Nutrition Help
- **Perks** – tools to provide the assistance you need
 - Quit for Life – coaching to quit smoking
 - Assist America – link to quality emergency medical care while traveling
 - Fitness Discounts
 - Life Balance – discounts on fitness, travel, attractions, spas and relaxation
 - Active&Fit Direct – unlimited access to a nationwide network of more than 9,000 fitness locations for \$25 per month

EOTM Award for January 2020 – Kevin Richey



The CMS Employee of the Month for January 2020, Kevin Richey of the Bureau of Benefits' Workers Compensation division, center, is joined by Deputy Director Teresa Flesch, and Kevin's immediate supervisor, Jack Engle.

The life of a claims adjuster is incredibly technical work, with much of the work spent closely checking details for accuracy, thinking through the ways in which claimants could qualify for benefits, and entering into a sort of strategic game with any who might want to try to “beat” the State workers compensation system for benefits that have not been rightfully earned.

Kevin Richey is the **Southern Territory Workers Compensation Manager** in the Risk Management Division of the CMS Bureau of Benefits. Richey was named CMS Employee of the Month for January 2020, in recognition of his reliable above-and-beyond approach to his work, including tens of millions of dollars in cost avoidance that he has helped capture in 2019 alone. He says he was still extremely surprised to be recognized say the least.

“I couldn’t believe it – what a thoughtful honor... First, this is all a team effort and my supervisor, Jack Engle, and I work together on strategies every day,” said Richey, a 17-year veteran of the State’s insurance claims work with more than 30 years in claims adjustment work overall. “Honestly, I am at a point where I had been considering retiring, and I really wasn’t sure what I was going to do as we got to the end of the year. But when I was informed of the recognition, I was truly shocked, and it re-energized me as I thought about it – made me feel as though people really are paying attention to the importance of the work we try to do. I decided then and there to stick around a bit longer.”

Richey’s supervisors were glad to hear of his change of heart. **“Kevin is such a key to the good things we are able to do in Benefits – his experience is pretty much irreplaceable,”** said Deputy Director of the Bureau of Benefits Teresa Flesch. “Kevin has been working to improve operations and reduce the cost of workers compensation especially since the claims portion has been outsourced to a private firm. **He has implemented accountability procedures for the third-party claims firm that have helped improve our working relationships with the Attorney General’s office, and with the Workers Compensation Coordinators** – it has ultimately resulted in higher quality service to all parties.”

Engle says simply, “Kevin adds so much to our experience and professional approach. He is very dedicated and just excels at the work.”

At the same time, Richey’s willingness to put in extra hours as needed became invaluable when the Bureau of Benefits suffered a tragic and unexpected loss with the September passing of longtime Workers Compensation staff member, Tom Brunner. “We were devastated by Tom’s loss, but Kevin stepped up willingly and worked through some difficult circumstances to maintain productivity in the Workers Compensation unit, on top of his other job duties,” Flesch explained. “He worked long hours to ensure that all email correspondence was handled in a timely way, make sure independent medical evaluation consultations went on without interruption, and to authorize settlements or approve surveillance as needed. His ability and experience have been invaluable during this very difficult time of loss – and he did all that without fanfare or even a second thought.”

In the meantime, Richey maintained production of two claims inventories he manages, conducted regular case reviews, delivered needed training to Workers Comp Coordinators as needed, and maintained his normal territory duties and workload, Flesch added.



If you are interested in nominating a person or team for Employee of the Month, please go **bit.ly/CMS-EOTM** to make a submission.

Richey says the work is challenging and rewarding as he seeks a quick turnaround and payment of legitimately earned benefits, but he understands that all claims must be investigated to thwart any who might attempt to take advantage of the system. “Most people working for the State are honest and want only what they are entitled to, in terms of benefits,” Richey says. “But there are always a few who think they can beat the system somehow. It’s a chess game, and I love it – I know there must be something wrong with me. But I am very competitive, and I take a lot of pride in making sure all legitimate claims are paid as quickly as possible,” while any unwarranted claims are denied.

“We tend to see some of the same names come up on that end, and I want them to know I’m still here, and paying attention,” Richey said.

For the moment, Flesch is breathing a sigh of relief that Richey has decided to stay on staff. “Kevin’s contributions, professional approach, and concept of teamwork are greatly appreciated,” Flesch said. “He proves again and again what a true asset he is to the Bureau of Benefits. We’re really lucky to have him.”

Better Know the Bureaus

All across Illinois, our CMS colleagues do amazing work. Get a behind the scenes look at accomplishments of different bureaus.

Bureau of Personnel

The Department of Central Management Services’ Bureau of Personnel (BoP) is responsible for external agency personnel support as well as internal personnel for the Department. The Bureau is aligned to CMS’ Office of the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), along with the Bureau of Labor Relations and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. In their external capacity, the BoP is the primary compliance function for all State agencies and the keeper of all State employee records that fall under the jurisdiction of the Governor.

There are approximately 115 employees within CMS BoP and is divided into four operational divisions and an administrative office. The operational Divisions include, Examining and Counseling, Transactions, Technical Services, and Internal Personnel.

The **Bureau of Personnel’s Hiring Reform Team** is leading the transformation of our State hiring process to improve the efficiency, quality, and diversity of the hiring process. During the testing phase over 18 agencies have participated with full implementation of Merit Compensation positions to be completed by late spring of 2020.

- From as long as 330 days, to fewer than 45 days to hire Merit Comp employees.
- Reduction from a 1,000-step process to less than a 100-step hiring process.
- Decrease from a 99% paper process to 90% automated process.

The **Bureau of Personnel Transaction’s and Records and Back Wage Claims** have played a vital role in updating personnel histories to implement missed step increases as part of this year’s contract negotiations.

This year alone, the team processed the following:

- 43,000 Transactions
- 2,414 Lists
- 863 Permits
- 399 Back Wage Claims

BoP currently processes and administers thousands of tests and exams for current and potential State employees. Through BoP Testing centers located in Springfield, Chicago, Rockford, Champaign, and Marion, Illinois residents can access testing and counseling services. This includes grades for Open Competitive, Promotional, Upward Mobility, and Accommodated tests.

- CMS testing centers administered 70,497 tests over the last 12 months at the five test locations.
- Springfield and Chicago testing centers lead the way with Springfield at 34,468 and Chicago with 22,307.

In addition, during the 2019 calendar year to date, **BoP Division of Examining and Counseling** also processed thousands of other transactions supporting the State hiring process and employee promotions.

- 25,248 Open Competitive applications.
- 23,498 Promotional applications.
- 7,454 Prequal/UMP applications.

The **BoP Disabled Hiring Program** works collaboratively with our DHS partners to assist Illinois residents with a disability the opportunity to obtain State employment. The Successful Disabilities Opportunities Program (SD) prequalifies disabled applicants placing them on the SD list for agencies to utilize during their hiring process.

- 1,376 individuals have engaged with CMS to participate in the program with 256 on the current SD list for potential employment.

CMS BoP is also responsible for administering the Statewide Upward Mobility Program, providing opportunities for State employees to improve their education, skills, and training into hard to fill positions in the health care and technology fields.

- UMP currently has over 5,000 active participants in the program.
- CMS has set an internal goal of doubling the participation rate in 2020 to nearly 10,000.

Internal Personnel is responsible for all human resources functions for CMS and has been working to fully staff the agency. The office oversees and administers the Classification Plan, Benefits Program, Hiring and Time-keeping functions for the agency. After years of understaffing and turnover, CMS is moving forward with staff upgrades to provide our agency partners the support they need from CMS.

- Internal Personnel is responsible for overseeing the human resources functions for 889 payroll employees.
- Over the last year 211 vacancies have been filled by Internal Personnel.
- Processed over 1,473 personnel transactions.
- Reviewed and updated over 425 job specs (104s).



Mark Mahoney
Chief Administrative
Officer



Colleen Alderman
Deputy Director of
Labor Relations



Lisa G. Williams
Deputy Director of
Diversity & Inclusion



Jake Altman
Assistant Deputy
Director of Personnel



HAPPY
NEW
YEAR



CMS Leadership Award to Katy Straub for Ensuring Access to Justice in Admin Hearings



The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) has recognized **Katy L. Straub** as the first recipient of the **CMS Distinguished Deputy Award** for her work since 2018 in establishing the Bureau of Administrative Hearings and ensuring consistent and accessible justice for

Illinoisans seeking equal rights protection under the law. Straub has been **Deputy Director for the CMS Bureau of Administrative Hearings** since early 2018.

“All Illinoisans should be able to seek a needed measure of justice to protect their basic civil rights, but during the past decade or more, that access had become difficult for many to attain,” said **CMS Acting Director Janel L. Forde**, as she announced CMS’ first leadership award of its kind. “Katy Straub brings seemingly unlimited energy and skill to her work and has done a remarkable job of getting the Bureau of Administrative Hearings off the ground and into practice about as quickly as it could have been done. Just as important, Katy led an early cooperative effort with the Department of Human Rights (DHR) and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) to quickly meet the goal of the Governor’s Executive Order,” Number 2018-08, which required the elimination of a backlog of more than 2,000 claims cases that faced Human Rights officials little more than a year ago.

Despite the State’s best efforts to combat discrimination through the Human Rights Act during the early 2000s, thousands of Illinois cases have waited for years to be heard. The growing case backlog was the direct result of limited resources and flawed processes. It was recognized that without decisive action, the pending caseload before the Human Rights Commission could top 3,000 by FY 20.

Through Deputy Director Straub’s leadership, the Bureau of Administrative Hearings partnered at the end of 2018 with HRC, DHR, the CMS Office of Operational Excellence, and the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to advance a cooperative and mutually beneficial solution that enables more Illinoisans to

access the assistance needed to ensure protection of their rights. Together, the coalition created a plan to fully eliminate the case backlog within 18 months through key process changes to eliminate bottlenecks and other system failures.

“With modest or marginal resources, many low-income residents cannot afford the legal fees and may not be aware of how to do litigation anyway,” Forde said. Those individuals have the right to turn to DHR and HRC to help them access justice, no matter their ability to pay. Owing to the partnerships Straub has helped create, Illinois citizens have increased access to the legal help they need, and the backlog was quickly whittled away – **the reworked Human Rights hearing process successfully slashed the backlog by 44 percent in just the first six months. It took the coalition just 14 months to clear the backlog entirely**, a full four months earlier than estimated.

Within the multi-agency partnership, Straub led the effort to streamline processes, improve service outcomes, and institute more rigid timeframes for each step in the filing and review process. She sought and received a temporary increase in dedicated staff assigned to the backlog, including attorneys and trained Administrative Law Judges. She oversaw the group’s long-range plan that included returning staff levels to normal once the backlog was eliminated and creating training opportunities for new and existing employees to ensure the new processes would be adhered to permanently.

“Together, we began an aggressive turnaround in just the first 60 days, and we’re striving to earn back the public’s trust and confidence to become a model for transforming government,” Straub explains. In those first 60 days in fact, some 500 cases out of 2,600 were resolved. Thanks to her continuous efforts and collaborative spirit, the overall human rights case backlog at the Commission decreased by 44 percent within six months, and its Request for Review backlog is down 40 percent as cases are being handled much more fluidly throughout the process.

Straub’s office is accomplishing this without sacrificing due process or the quality of the decision making on legal cases. “We are so proud of Katy, her staff, and the cooperating agencies involved,” said **CMS Chief of Staff Anthony Pascente**. “The work just to keep that

collaboration together and ensure productivity was very difficult, and Katy has done a tremendous job of bringing people together and keeping the project right on track.” In addition to her extensive work in restructuring and fixing the broken administrative hearings process affecting more than a dozen Illinois State agencies, Straub also has worked quietly to build partnerships and coalitions at county and municipal levels throughout Illinois to ensure that administrative work at the local levels adopts proven State procedures and follows a similar path toward efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the urban and suburban areas of Chicago and Cook County where well over half the Illinois population resides and many citizens seek similar opportunities for access and justice.

Prior to joining CMS, Straub served for four years at the **Department of Financial and Professional Regulation**, where she held roles as Assistant General Counsel, Prosecutor, and Associate General Counsel. Straub graduated with a B.A. in Political Science and international Studies from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and earned her Juris Doctorate from DePaul University in Chicago. She lives in the city with her husband, and together they love running their dog along Chicago’s lakefront.

Happening Around CMS

Health & Wellness Initiative Kick-off

On Monday, December 16th, CMS Bureau of Benefits hosted their premiere Holiday Wellness event at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, as part of their ongoing health and wellness initiative for 2020.

The Happy, Healthy Holiday Stress-free event kicked off the first of many similar events that CMS intends to host for our members at various locations around the State. The health and wellness initiative aims to partner with our benefit carriers to highlight the numerous free benefits and resources offered to members through their selected benefit plans and encourage members to engage in their wellness and community.

The event focused on the holiday season and how to manage it- stress-free; taking into account how the holidays may affect stress, mood, nutrition and fitness.



Celebrating the Holidays

CMS employees got in the holiday spirit and celebrated the season together.



Noteworthy January Observations



Jan. 1: New Year's Day
Jan. 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day
National Blood Donor Month



Illinois Events

Jan. 10 – Jan. 12: Central Illinois Auto Show

Peoria Civic Center, 201 SW Jefferson Ave., Peoria
<http://peoriaautoshow.com/>

Jan. 11: Chicago Ale Fest – Winter Edition

Navy Pier Aon Grand Ballroom, 600 E Grand Ave., Chicago
<https://www.chicagoalefest.com/>

Jan. 17 – Jan. 19: 2020 Cubs Convention

Sheraton, 301 E North Water Street, Chicago
<https://www.mlb.com/cubs/fans/cubs-convention>

Jan. 24 – Jan. 25: Illinois Symphony Orchestra Magnificent Mozart

First Presbyterian Church, 321 S. 7th Street, Springfield
Second Presbyterian Church, 313 N East Street, Bloomington
<https://www.ilsymphony.org/concerts-events/magnificent-mozart>

Jan. 24 – Jan. 25: SoxFest 2020

McCormick Place, 2301 S. Indiana Ave., Chicago
<https://www.mlb.com/whitesox/fans/soxfest>

Jan. 25: Slow Food Springfield 12th Annual Film Festival

University of Illinois Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield
<https://www.facebook.com/events/608915279646312/>



State of Illinois
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